

CHAPTER XXVI

THE BLACK HAWK WAR

The Black Hawk War, the worst Indian outbreak in Utah, lasted over a period of three years, and resulted in the loss of many lives and thousands of dollars' worth of property. The depredations were confined to Sanpete and Sevier counties pretty much, although it affected the entire southern part of the State. A band of Utes, under a chief named Black Hawk, were the firebrands that brought on this war, and it was waged with such determination by the Indians that it looked at times as if the colonists would be compelled to move out of that part of the Territory. True, a cordon of little forts had been built in Sanpete and on south to Millard County, but it was impossible to garrison all at the same time.

A policy of reconciliation was adopted by the governor of the Territory, who undoubtedly was influenced by Brigham Young. Word was sent to the colonizers of the south by Young, almost daily, to examine with care the temper of the Indians; to remove causes of possible controversy, and restore peace; to seek out the leaders and make them gifts, and assure them that the whites were desirous of the Indians' welfare.

Indians Urged to Go on Reservations.—The Black Hawk War came at a time when the Government was urgent that the Indians in the West be placed on reservations and taught the methods of husbandry. This was irritating to many of the larger tribes east of the Rocky Mountains, and no doubt it had the effect on the mountain tribes of putting

them on the defensive. Then, too, the colonizers were constantly taking up land. Sanpete was fast becoming a granary, and the Indians saw their lands being taken from their control. This, after all, has been the great cause of Indian warfare in the United States since the settlement of this country. Land to an Indian is his all, his wealth, his livelihood. While the Indians did not understand the principle of land ownership, nor did they know what it meant to till permanent areas, yet the land was folkland; it belonged to all the men of the tribe as hunting-ground. It was the gift of the Great Spirit to be the heritage of the children of the Great Spirit.

Chief Yene-wood.—Several stories are told as to how the Black Hawk War started. Since the treaty drawn up with Aropeen, ceding Sanpete to the colonizers, there had been intermittent Indian outbreaks, which caused the people great anxiety at times. During the winter of 1864 and 1865 a small band of Indians was camped near Gunnison, Sanpete County, where they contracted smallpox, which resulted in the death of many of them. The Indians seemed to think the whites were responsible for the sickness, and threatened to burn their homes and steal their cattle. It was determined to talk the matter over with the chiefs of the band, and consequently a meeting was called to meet at Mantu on the 9th of April, 1865. A number of the Utes responded, and many were for the pipe of peace, but a young chief, Yene-wood, could not be satisfied, and went about mumbling and making demonstrations, trying to persuade the other Indians against peace. John Lowry deputed him (Lowry) finish talking, when some one spoke, saying: "Look out; he is getting his arrows." Whereupon Lowry stepped up, caught hold of the Indian and pulled him off his horse, and was about to abuse him in some

way, when some of the bystanders interfered. Indian Joe mounted his horse and rode out to an Indian camp at Shumway Springs, where he reported what had happened. This caused excitement among the Indians, who sent out their runners to distant Indian camps to stir them to war. In consequence, the Indians generally broke camp and moved into the mountains. Those at Richfield went to Salina to join those from Sanpete.

Warfare broke out, and the various bands took up the cry and began their work of destruction. Sanpete and Sevier were like a hive of angry bees. No large parties were organized, but small bands of Indians of from twenty-five to one hundred ranged the valleys and vied with each other in their killing and stealing of cattle. At that time Fred J. Keisel, late of Ogden City, was the Indian agent in Sanpete, and was under the direction of Colonel O. H. Irish, the superintendent of Indian affairs for Utah. Mr. Keisel just previous to his death said in an interview:

The Indians of Sanpete and Sevier were treacherous, and were firmly convinced that the whites intended to drive them from their hunting-grounds. This was true of other Western tribes, for all the Indians east of the Rocky Mountains were restless as they saw the encroachments of the whites, and particularly as they noted the building of the railroad, which they knew meant the taking of their lands. When it came to the encroachment of the whites, all Indians felt a sympathy for one another, and the Black Hawk War was but the same feeling of hostility against the American colonizer that was prevalent in the West.

I had ammunition and firearms, and I was glad to furnish them to the whites. The governor of the Territory did not understand the nature of the Utes, and had he worked unitedly with Brigham Young, the Black Hawk War might have been averted.

Following the killing of Peter Ludvigsen, near Gunnison, and the killing and scalping of two men near Salina, Colonel Allred with eighty-four men started in pursuit of the Indians

into the mountains, but met defeat, and was compelled to return to Salina. Murder and the stealing of cattle continued. It became evident that a firm stand must be taken to quell the disturbances. As the Indians were in disunited bands, it was thought possible that by establishing peace with individual groups the trouble might be stopped. Colonel O. H. Irish was the Indian agent for Utah, and in June, 1865, he met the Indians at Spanish Fork Indian Farm Reservation, and had a long talk with them, which resulted in a treaty with the band. Many noted Utah chiefs were present, including Tabby, Kanosh, Sowcette and Sanpitch. Fifteen chiefs in all signed the document. By the terms of the treaty the Indians promised to move to Uintah Valley within one year from the ratification of the agreement, giving up their title to the lands they were then occupying. They were required to be peaceful and not go to war with other tribes, except in self-defense, nor to steal from nor molest the whites. They were to assist in cultivating the reservation lands and to send their children to the schools established for their benefit. On its part, the United States Government promised to extend its protection to them; farms were to be laid out, grist and lumber mills built, schools established, houses furnished and annuities paid to the principal chiefs; and the tribes were to receive \$25,000 for the first ten years, \$20,000 annually for the next twenty years, and \$15,000 annually for thirty years thereafter.

The Indians were also to hunt, dig roots, and gather berries on all unoccupied lands, to fish in their accustomed places, and erect houses for the purpose of curing their fish. On the 18th of September of the same year, Colonel Irish successfully negotiated a similar treaty with the Piede Indians, at Pinto, Washington County.

Kanosh was the only Indian who was able to attach his signature to the document, a fact of which he was very

proud. The rest of the chiefs attached their marks. Wilford Woodruff, in his journal, says of this event:

President Young and company drove to the Indian farm and held a meeting with the Indians. Colonel Irish, the agent, had called upon President Young to assist him in making a treaty, which he could not bring about because of the opposition of the Indians to it. Mr. Irish made a speech, and the Indian chiefs made speeches. They did not want to sell their lands and go away. President Young then made a talk to them, and explained that it would be best for them to sign the treaty, and the advantages that would come to them from it. They finally said they would do as he said, but they wanted to think it over until the next day. When they met again, the chiefs came forward and signed the treaty, except one by the name of Sanpich, who claimed to be the main chief. He lay in his tent on his face for two days. He was on his dignity. The other chiefs paid no attention to him. After all was over Sanpich came forward and wanted his presents, and wanted to sign the treaty. However, he received some presents, but had to come to Salt Lake City to sign the treaty. Colonel Johns of the United States Army was present, and Colonel Irish informed him that he could do nothing with the Indians except through the influence of President Young.

William V. Black, one of the pioneer settlers of Millard County, was present at this meeting, and the next day wrote about it. In an interview with him, he told about the speech of Kanosh as well as that of President Young. "Kanosh," said he, "stepped into the centre of the circle of whites and Indians, and uttered words that were really eloquent, and as I remember them, he said: 'Kanosh will make peace. Many snows have Indians made war. Whites make our hands give good food. We must bury tomahawk and make peace with whites and Great Spirit.'" And President Young said, among other things:

Go to your wigwams and live in peace. Try to learn how to till the soil, and to live near to the Great Spirit.

This was followed by one of the celebrated treaties of American history in 1868. It was the "Articles of a Treaty and Agreement Made and Entered Into at Washington, D. C., on the Second Day of March, 1868, between Nathaniel G. Taylor, commissioner of Indian Affairs, Alexander C. Hunt, Governor of Colorado Territory, and Kit Carson . . . and the representatives of the Tabaguache, Mache, Capote, Weeminuche, Yampa, Grand River, and Uintah bands of Ute Indians." By the terms of the treaty, the Utes agreed to move to a reservation of 15,120,000 acres in western Colorado, extending from the White River on the north to the Rio de los Pinos on the south.

The United States now solemnly agrees that no persons, except those therein authorized so to do, and except officers, agents, and employees of the government as may be authorized to enter upon Indian reservations in discharge of duties enjoined by law, shall ever be permitted to pass over, settle upon, or reside in the territory described in this article.

The Government agreed to maintain two agencies on the reservation, a good school, and to "erect on said reservation, and near to each agency herein authorized, respectively a good water-power sawmill, with a grist-mill and a shingle mill attached." Indians were to choose lands, and farming implements should be furnished them. (*Knappler, Indian Affairs, Laws, and Treaties*, vol. II.)

General Wells in Command.—General Daniel H. Wells was called to go into the field with the militia, and on June 20, 1867, he arrived in Manti. It was necessary to pursue a definite policy toward the Indians. Reinforcements came from Davis County, and soon General Wells had a command of 200 men, with which he determined to strike the enemy with all the forces at his command. There was but one thing to do, and that was to defeat the Indians and to bring

them to terras of peace. Colonizers were constantly encouraged to go into Sanpete and Sevier to settle, and to take up the lands. Notwithstanding the constant raids of 1866-1867, it was a prosperous season in those districts, and a large harvest was the result. During the cutting of the grain and corn, minutemen were held in readiness, and the guns were kept loaded in expectation of an outbreak at any time.

The treaty of 1868 with the Utes east of the Wasatch, referred to before, had some influence on the Indians, for in August of that year a large powwow in Strawberry Valley resulted in a treaty, and the Indians promised to remain peaceable. While there were some outbreaks during the following four years, the Indians became more quiet, and General Morrow, of the United States army, concluded a treaty with them at Mount Pleasant, September 7, 1872.

The Black Hawk War cost the lives of at least seventy whites, the destruction of thousands of dollars' worth of property, and an expense of \$1,121,037 to the Territory of Utah. During the war more than 3,000 men were called into service, a large number when one considers the sparsely settled communities of the southern part of the State. The brunt of the strife was borne by the settlers of Sevier, Sanpete, Kane, Pkute, Iron, and Washington counties, and the militiamen who came to their assistance from other parts of the Territory.

Appreciation of services of men often comes after the years, but sooner or later people realize that "good deeds come to light." In March, 1905, the legislative assembly of Utah passed an act providing for a medal of honor for each of the Indian war veterans who saw service some time during the period from 1850 to 1872. In 1909 the State again recognized the Indian war veterans by passing a law appropriating \$50,000 for the veterans still living, or to their

widows, and the Act of Congress of February 19, 1916, pensions the survivors of the Indian wars from 1859 to 1891. It grants a pension of \$20 to the surviving officers and enlisted men, and \$12 per month to the surviving widows of said officers and enlisted men who served in the Black Hawk War from 1865 to 1867.

How the People Suffered.—During the long period of Indian wars, the people suffered from want of food, clothing, and shelter. Infants could not always be given proper care, and the mortality was very large. Mothers naturally did everything they could and approached their trials and sorrows unafraid. Little children had scanty clothing, and one child did not have a pair of shoes on for three years. Every bushel of wheat and corn had to be carefully harvested from the Indian raids, and when a beef was killed, the people shared the meat. It was a time when all shared alike, and there was consequently developed a spirit of kindness toward all people. If one family had food, they gladly shared with their neighbors.

The Mountain Meadows Massacre.—A terrible massacre of emigrants on their way to California occurred in southern Utah in September, 1857. Two companies of men, women, and children had camped on the banks of the Jordan River during the summer, and had resumed their journey, going by way of the southern route to the Pacific coast. They went through Beaver, Parowan, and Cedar City, and for people unacquainted with the desert country and unaccustomed to the bad roads, it was a hazardous undertaking. Drinking-water was not always to be had; the heat of the desert in summer was trying, and had it not been for the kindness of the colonizers of the southern part of the Territory, many passing emigrants might have perished. The first of the two companies reached California in safety, although they had been waylaid more than once by the

Indians. The second company reached Cedar City and went on to a little vale known as Mountain Meadows, where they camped. On September 7 they were attacked by Indians, among whom were some white settlers, and the men, women, and most of the children massacred, in a brutal manner. Seventeen of the little children were spared, and were ultimately taken back to homes of relatives in Arkansas.

Causes of the Massacre.—Like the Whitman massacre that occurred in Oregon ten years before, the Mountain Meadows massacre has been the source of a great many false accusations. For years, however, the Indians had noted the coming of the whites, and they naturally resented the encroachment. This was true all over the West. Raids were frequent on settlements, and, as already explained, for a number of years there had been Indian depredations in Utah. It was at a time, too, when the people of Utah had been grossly misrepresented in the East by officials of the Government, and emigrants passing through the Territory would often try to precipitate trouble with the people. While some of the whites urged the Indians on, and even took part in the massacre, it was an act of lawlessness on the part of individuals. Governor Young at his home, 300 miles away, was informed by messengers from Cedar City of the terrible occurrence.

The Mountain Meadows massacre was one of those incidents in our history which we all regret, but in this western land in the early days, the Indians often perpetrated deeds which were terrible and which we wish had never happened.

PART III

THE STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATION